



SHARP News



New SHARPFact Available: Unplanned Pregnancy Prevention – An Emergency Option

A new SHARPFact fact sheet about **emergency contraception** is now available on the SHARP website at <http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/sharp/shrpfact.htm>.

SHARPFacts are 21 free, downloadable, one page (double-sided) fact sheets on sexual health topics that may be downloaded from the SHARP website. Use these as a source of brochures for your clinics and health promotion efforts.

This new SHARPFact is entitled “**Unplanned Pregnancy Prevention: An Emergency Option**”. It includes facts about the importance of family planning, methods of birth control, family planning services available to DoN beneficiaries, and emergency contraceptives.

If a woman has had unprotected intercourse without using birth control, or if something happened (such as the condom broke), she can use emergency contraception up to 72 hours after unprotected sex.

Emergency contraceptives, taken within 72 hours after unprotected sex, are 75% effective in preventing conception. Emergency contraceptives do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, are not intended for frequent use, should not be taken before unprotected sex, and are not recommended over more effective contraceptive methods.

A variety of oral contraceptive therapies are available for use as emergency contraception. Also, two emergency contraceptive pill products have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in preventing pregnancy after intercourse when barrier contraceptives have failed or when no contraceptives were used at all. One product contains the hormones progesterin and estrogen; the other contains just progesterin. Both products are believed to work by delaying or inhibiting ovulation, or by keeping a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterine wall. These pills are not effective once the fertilized egg has implanted.

Emergency contraception is **not** the same as the “abortion pill” (RU-486). Emergency contraceptive pills work the same way birth control pills do — they can prevent a pregnancy from starting. RU-486 will actually induce an abortion after a woman has conceived instead of preventing conception. The FDA has stated that there is no evidence that emergency contraceptive pills will have an adverse effect on an established pregnancy.

“Chart a Safe Course”

Sexual Health and Responsibility Program (SHARP)

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